

[1] presented to the House of Delegates for approval at
[2] the annual meeting in August. Therefore, I will
[3] defer to any discussion on that until the Council
[4] can tell you the results of their past meeting of
[5] this weekend.

[6] Third, the Council needs to revise
[7] Interpretation 509-4 of its Basic Consumer
[8] Information Standard 509 so that any law school
[9] that discloses its accreditation status gives the
[10] name and address of the entity recognized by the
[11] Secretary, and not the name of the professional
[12] organization. The Council also submitted a draft
[13] policy with its response, and I believe it
[14] discussed and will disclose what the outcome was
[15] from this past weekend meeting.

[16] Because the House of Delegates will likely
[17] approve any proposed revisions at the upcoming
[18] meeting, Department staff believes that the Council
[19] will include the outcome of any August vote in its
[20] interim report due September 1, 1998.

[21] Regarding third-party written comments,
[22] the Department received 27 third-party written

[1] party's request is unrealistic and inconsistent
[2] with current recognition practices. The Committee
[3] has routinely recommended continued recognition for
[4] other accrediting agencies undergoing a systematic
[5] review of the validity and reliability of its
[6] standards for as many as 10 years and no less than
[7] 1 year. In addition, the current standards were
[8] revised in August 1996, and adopted on the basis of
[9] consensus validation.

[10] The Department received several requests
[11] from persons to make oral presentations. They
[12] include three representatives from the
[13] Massachusetts School of Law, a representative from
[14] the Clinical Legal Education Association, and a
[15] representative from the American Law Deans
[16] Association who accepted an invitation to make an
[17] oral presentation.

[18] Because the Council's interim report did
[19] not address either of the two major concerns
[20] regarding the entity the Secretary will recognize
[21] or the issue of separate and independent,
[22] Department staff recommends that the Committee

[1] comments supporting the continued recognition of
[2] the Council and the acceptance of its interim
[3] report. Twenty-six of these letters came from
[4] deans of law schools approved by the Council. Each
[5] dean's letter supported the action taken by the
[6] Council to reduce the time needed to complete the
[7] study of the validity and reliability of its
[8] standards from 6 years to 3 years.

[9] Additionally, each of the deans emphasized
[10] that the standards as revised in August 1996
[11] represented a compromise of conflicting points by
[12] relevant constituencies. The Association of
[13] American Law Schools provided written comments that
[14] supported the program of review used by the Council
[15] to establish the validity and reliability of the
[16] standards for legal education.

[17] The Department received one written
[18] comment from a third party who opposes the
[19] Council's continued recognition and this
[20] Committee's acceptance of the interim report. The
[21] third party primarily addressed the two issues
[22] already identified in the staff analysis as major

[1] accept the interim report as a partial response to
[2] the Secretary's August 1, 1997, letter.
[3] Consequently, staff recommends that the Council
[4] include the following specific items in its next
[5] interim report, which is due September 1, 1998.

[6] The Council must include in the interim
[7] report a complete description of; one, the steps
[8] taken by the Council and other entities within the
[9] ABA between the receipt of the August 1, 1998,
[10] staff analysis and September 1, 1998, to correct
[11] each of the major concerns and come into full
[12] compliance with those two remaining sections of the
[13] criteria; additionally, if the steps taken do not
[14] bring the agency within full compliance by
[15] September 1, the additional steps, with appropriate
[16] timelines that the agency will take to correct each
[17] major concern and come into full compliance.

[18] Additionally, the Council will need to
[19] address its efforts to come into full compliance
[20] with the three remaining other issues. Because the
[21] Council indicated that it is carrying out specific
[22] activities to review the standards in the 100

[1] concerns, namely the entity that the Secretary will
[2] recognize and the separate and independent issue.

[3] However, the third party opponent urges
[4] this Committee to require the Council to act within
[5] weeks to determine the validity and reliability of
[6] its standards. If the Council fails to make a
[7] determination of the validity and reliability of
[8] their standards within an expedited time frame, the
[9] third party requests that the Secretary terminate
[10] the Council's recognition.

[11] Department staff believes that the Council
[12] has complied with the Secretary's request to
[13] shorten the time frame for completion of its
[14] validation study. Under the revised schedule, the
[15] Council will complete its study of all of the
[16] standards by 2000. The research model provides for
[17] comments, challenges, and consensus by relevant
[18] constituencies as each standard is reexamined
[19] through a process designed to reflect the values
[20] and purposes relevant to legal education and the
[21] educational needs of the students.

[22] Department staff finds that the third

[1] series, the 200 series, and the 800 series during
[2] the 1997-98 academic year, Department staff
[3] recommends that the Council report on the results
[4] of those activities in the interim report due
[5] September 1, 1998.

[6] In the event that the Council fails to
[7] come into compliance or to present an appropriate
[8] plan regarding the major concerns involving the
[9] entity to be recognized and the administrative
[10] capability and qualifications of the members of the
[11] House to make accrediting decisions, Department
[12] staff recommends that the Committee proceed with a
[13] recommendation for administrative action to limit,
[14] suspend, or terminate the Council's recognition by
[15] the Secretary as a nationally recognized
[16] accrediting agency.

[17] This concludes my presentation, and I am
[18] available for comments.

[19] CHAIRPERSON DELCO: Thank you.
[20] The Committee readers are Gordon Ambach
[21] and George Pruitt, Gentlemen?

[22] DR. PRUITT: I do not have any questions,